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SUBJECT: TIM SHORTLEY MEETS FOREIGN MINISTER AND GREAT
LAKES ENVOY

Classified By: Ambassador Michael R. Arietti, reason 1.4 (B/D)

11. (C) Summary. Senior Envoy for Conflict Resolution Tim Shortley and Ambassador met with Foreign Minister Charles Murigande and Great Lakes Envoy Ambassador Richard Sezibera March 6 to discuss rebel Congolese militia leader Laurent Nkunda, the Kivus Peace Process and the Nairobi Agreement, and next steps in bringing about the disarmament and demobilization of the FDLR. The Rwandans welcomed the return of Nkunda's CNDP to the peace process, noted continuing difficulties in engaging the DRC government on the Nairobi Agreement, called attention to what the GOR considered to be obstructionist behavior by MONUC in the surrender of FDLR cadres, and agreed that a "cocktail" of efforts toward dismantling the FDLR was the proper way to proceed. End summary.

12. (C) Senior Envoy Shortley began the meeting with Murigande and Sezibera (also attended by National Security External Affairs Chief Joseph Nzabamwita and USAID Officer Nicholas Jenks) by explaining the welcome return of Laurent Nkunda and his CNDP political formation to the Kivus peace process. Shortley relayed that his essential message to Nkunda had been simple -- his future lay in being a constructive participant in the peace process, and he needed to act accordingly. Shortley also spoke of his concern at the slow pace of implementation of various mechanisms under the Kivus peace process, and the need for the GOR to engage closely and cooperatively with the Congolese government. The mutual suspicion of the two governments had to be overcome. Particularly unhelpful had been recent sessions of the Nairobi Agreement's Joint Monitoring Group (JMG) task force, in which large amounts of time had been spent on intensive examination of minutes -- this had to cease.

13. (C) Murigande welcomed increased engagement by the USG in the Kivus. He regarded the problem of mutual suspicion to be central to the lack of progress on the ground in the Kivus, and agreed that Nkunda needed to show concrete involvement in the peace process, to both further that process, and avoid providing the Congolese government with an "excuse" to take no action against the FDLR. Nkunda was being "demonized" by NGOs in the Kivus, and the Congolese government was tempted to shift its focus to Nkunda, rather than the agreed-upon effort against the FDLR. Nzabamwita briefly mentioned intelligence reports the GOR had received that the Congolese armed forces (FARDC) were engaged in planning attacks against Nkunda, rather than preparing for

the March 15 start of operations against the FDLR.

¶4. (C) Ambassador Sezibera spoke at some length upon the unhelpful behavior of various MONUC officials and forces when FDLR cadres attempted to surrender. For example, sometimes MONUC forces refused to accept their surrender, and sometimes MONUC demobilization officers lacked sufficient vehicles or communication gear to reach the FDLR deserters. Much more needed to be done by MONUC to process those FDLR personnel already attempting to give themselves up. Nzabamwita noted that Felicien Mureramanzi, former FDLR deputy commander in South Kivu, who had surrendered to the GOR on February 28, had confirmed that hard-core FDLR commanders kept their subordinates from deserting with brutal disciplinary tactics, including execution. Yet, these commanders were aware of the increased focus by the international community on confronting the FDLR, and were closely watching the March 15 deadline for FARDC operations. Pressure on the FDLR, said Murigande, could split the FDLR command structure from the rank-and-file, and desertions would increase.

¶5. (C) Ambassador Arietti noted recent discussion in several fora on the need for a "cocktail" of actions against the FDLR, including the forthcoming Security Council resolution, the push to sanction several top FDLR commanders and officers, and the effort by the Congolese government to talk with several FDLR splinter factions to encourage their surrender. Shortley noted the USG intention to begin military training for FARDC forces, and the recent visit of a psy/ops team to plan operations in the Kivus. Murigande and Sezibera agreed on the need for just such a "cocktail" approach, with MONUC increasing its efforts as well.

¶6. (C) Shortly explained his plan to address NGOs in Goma to explain USG policy, then to meet with President Kabila. The USG message to Kabila would be: we will work on progress with Nkunda, while your government focuses on the FDLR. The USG would not participate in the Congolese government's planned discussion with FDLR splinter groups in the Kisangani, but would issue a statement to support it. Murigande again welcomed USG engagement with the Congolese government, and he and Sezibera said they would speak with their delegation to the JMG task force to counsel appropriate behavior (while noting that part of the problem was that, with no progress on the ground in the Kivus, the JMG had little or nothing to do).

¶7. (C) When asked by Ambassador about the proposed March 25-27 dates for the Tripartite-Plus summit in Bujumbura, Murigande said the dates were in principle acceptable, but noted that a March 19 East African Community summit might slip. He would advise when the EAC dates were firmed up.

¶8. (C) Comment. As in the past, the Rwandans reaffirmed their commitment to the Nairobi Agreement and to the peace process in the Kivus, indicated their frustration with what they considered to be MONUC's lack of real focus on the FDLR, pledged to work as best they could with the Congolese government, and agreed that a "cocktail" of measures in the Kivus and by the international community offered the best opportunity for progress. They have seen many previous plans go unfulfilled, but they also realize that the current efforts by the USG and others represent the best chance in some time for real peace in eastern Congo. End comment.

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